

JOINT MEETING OF THE CALFED AND CALIFORNIA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL WATERSHED WORK GROUPS

Meeting Date: Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Meeting Location: 1528 Oakdale Road
Modesto, CA

Meeting Attendees: See Attachment A

Welcome and Introductions

CALFED Watershed Work Group (CALFED Work Group) Co-Chair Martha Davis began the meeting with a description of the meeting format. She indicated that this is the first of the CALFED Work Group “road show” meetings. Ms. Davis welcomed participants’ feedback on the format, as CALFED will be planning additional road show meetings in the future. She stated that CALFED is committed to supporting watershed programs throughout the State and is interested in finding out about watershed efforts in the San Joaquin region. This interest prompted CALFED to take advantage of the opportunity to visit Modesto at the same time as the California Biodiversity Council (CBC) meeting.

Ms. Davis then invited participants to introduce themselves and identify what they consider the greatest challenge in their watershed work. A list of attendees (Attachment A) is included with this summary. Some of the challenges identified include: building capacity; promoting locally led processes; building partnerships with agencies; expanding floodplain habitat; working with seasonal, ephemeral watersheds; working with multiple watersheds; and creating sustainable programs and projects.

Maria Rea of the California Resources Agency (Resources Agency) also welcomed the meeting participants. She indicated that the Resources Agency is interested in supporting watershed efforts throughout the State. Ms. Rea explained that the CBC Work Group was formed in 1998 with strong participation by State and federal representatives. She encouraged those interested in participating on the CBC Work Group to contact Renée Hoyos of the Resources Agency (renee.hoyos@resources.ca.gov).

Ms. Rea stated that the CBC Work Group serves as a conduit to help coordinate statewide watershed efforts. The CBC Work Group historically has focused on funding and management issues and has met regularly. This meeting is the first time that the CBC Work Group meeting has been held in conjunction with a CBC management meeting. She also requested feedback on meeting format to provide to the CBC at Thursday’s meeting. She announced that all participants are invited to Wednesday’s CBC meeting to discuss natural community conservation

planning and habitat conservation planning in agricultural areas, and Thursday's CBC management meeting.

Assembly Bill 2117 Update

Ms. Hoyos provided an update on Assembly Bill 2117 (AB 2117). She explained that the legislation asked the Resources Agency and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to evaluate three watersheds to inform decision-makers on what is and what is not working in local watershed programs and projects. The Resources Agency and SWRCB instead evaluated 10 watershed programs. The two agencies used questionnaires and conducted a series of interviews of the 10 local watershed program contacts. These evaluations are being summarized and a report to the State legislature is being prepared. The report is due to the legislature by February 1, 2002. The key topics in the report include issues regarding:

- funding;
- technical assistance;
- monitoring and assessment;
- organization, operating, and capacity building;
- implementation of projects; and
- regulatory compliance.

Ken Coulter of the SWRCB clarified that the 10 watershed programs selected are representative but not necessarily exemplary. Questions have been asked about why some projects were selected and others not. Mr. Coulter indicated that the SWRCB and Resources Agency sought to get an accurate cross-section of watershed groups. Individuals interested in contributing to the report are encouraged to email Ms. Hoyos or Mr. Coulter.

Discussion

Ms. Rea invited feedback from meeting participants regarding State agencies' involvement in watershed management.

One participant commented that financial reporting required by the State is complicated for local watershed coordinators to complete. Reporting requirements should be simplified and streamlined. Additionally, funding opportunities should allow the task of reporting to be included in the project budget.

Another participant added that many watershed coordinators are working without a financial safety net and that separate funds should be set aside for administration of projects. Another participant suggested that reporting requirements be identified in advance of project funding.

CALFED Watershed Program Presentations

Ms. Davis explained that the morning agenda includes 3 sets of CALFED presentations: (1) overview of the CALFED Watershed Program; (2) overview of some example projects that support the goals of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program; and (3) overview of some of the projects recently funded by the CALFED Watershed Program.

CALFED Watershed Program Overview

Dennis Bowker (CALFED Watershed Program) provided an overview of the CALFED Watershed Program. He explained that it is important to remember that CALFED is not an entity—it is a program involving many different State and federal agencies. He also clarified that the CALFED Watershed Program is a separate program from the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP). In fact, the CALFED Bay-Delta Program comprises many different elements including the Watershed Program, ERP, Water Use Efficiency Program, Drinking Water Quality Program, Environmental Water Program, and others.

Mr. Bowker explained that the goals of the CALFED Watershed Program are to provide technical and financial assistance for watershed activities that help achieve the mission and objectives of CALFED, and to promote collaboration and integration among existing and future local watershed programs. The Watershed Program promotes an approach that involves partnerships with State, federal, and local agencies; local community stakeholders; and other interested parties to develop and implement watershed management actions that reduce stressors that diminish beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system.

Mr. Bowker stated that the first couple of years of implementation are focused on achieving certain objectives, including:

- funding the development of watershed assessments and plans;
- funding and implementing watershed conservation, maintenance, and restoration activities;
- establishing, funding, and maintaining assistance to local programs for project concept, design, and implementation;
- providing funding and assistance to help build the capacity of locally led watershed programs;
- assisting the CALFED Science Program to develop appropriate watershed management performance measures and adopt monitoring protocols; and
- improving the use and usefulness of watershed resource information centers.

Discussion

Following Mr. Bowker's presentation, a participant asked which types of projects received CALFED Watershed Program funding in the 2001–2002 Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP). Mr. Bowker answered that all types of projects received funding, including watershed assessments, capacity building, planning, and restoration projects. The projects selected to receive funding demonstrated a blending of the needs of local watershed groups and the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

Another participant asked how Watershed Program projects compare to ERP projects. Mr. Bowker answered that the Watershed Program seeks to fund planning efforts and assessment efforts and to support local groups. The ERP tends to be oriented more toward physical projects.

Ms. Davis reported that in reviewing grant proposals, the Watershed Program Selection Committee found that many applications did not adequately link the benefits of their projects to the Bay-Delta. The relationship between projects and the Bay-Delta must be substantive and well described in the proposals.

Watershed Work Group Presentations

Nettie Drake presented an overview of the Panoche–Silver Creek Watershed Coordinated Resource Management Program (CRMP). Ms. Drake indicated that she is the coordinator of the CRMP, which now encompasses the Toomy Gulch and Little Panoche Watersheds in the west San Joaquin Valley. The combined watersheds extend over 400,000 acres and include 200 private landowners and 40 public agencies. The area contains one of the largest natural deposits of selenium. The immediate goal of the CRMP is to establish relationships between landowners and public resources to address water quality, drainage, erosion, and sediment transport concerns in and around the watersheds. The long-range goals of the CRMP are to solve long-term problems through coordinated and cooperative resource management, improve the health of the ecosystem, improve water quality, reduce sediment loading, restore habitat, and improve the environment for those who live in the watershed.

Gary Nakamura (UC Cooperative Extension) gave a presentation on the Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council (Council). The Council was formed in 1993 with the development of a Memorandum of Understanding. The Council provides a forum for discussion among its diverse, broad-based, and open membership. The Council operates through the Western Shasta Resource Conservation District (RCD), a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) entity that conducts projects that cross property and administrative boundaries. The Council and Western Shasta RCD have a strong focus in the Clear Creek watershed. The Clear Creek watershed is near Redding and includes numerous private and public landowners, among them Sierra Pacific Industries, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service. This diversity of landowners provides a multitude of abilities, interests, and resources.

Watershed Program 2000–2001 Grantee Presentations

Patrick Koepele (Tuolumne River Preservation Trust) gave a presentation on the Tuolumne River Coalition, which was formed in 2000 to coordinate efforts between government agencies and nongovernmental organizations that benefit the environment and recreational opportunities of the Tuolumne River. The Tuolumne River Coalition was formed because there was a need to improve fish habitat in the Tuolumne River; interest existed in realizing a parkway-type vision through the Tuolumne River Regional Park; and the 1997 floods inspired nonstructural flood control improvements. Recently, the Tuolumne River Preservation Trust received a grant from the CALFED Watershed Program. The objectives of the grant are to develop an integrated plan that incorporates common goals of existing plans (Restoration Plan, County General Plan, city

plans, etc.), to provide education and outreach, and to hire a permanent coordinator for the Tuolumne River Coalition.

Rick Sandberg (Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship) provided a brief overview of a recently awarded grant for the Sacramento River Watershed Education and Outreach project. Previous monitoring of the Sacramento River revealed high levels of diazanon resulting from agricultural use. This project involves working with agricultural landowners along the Sacramento River to raise awareness and encourage a change in practices to reduce diazanon levels.

John Brody (San Joaquin River RCD) gave a presentation on the Watershed Stewardship Plan (Plan) for the Lower Mokelumne River. The Plan involves 32 stakeholder representatives. The Plan is nearing completion, and will soon be presented for comment at public meetings. Most of the land in the lower Mokelumne River region is in vineyards. A Winegrowers' Handbook has been developed for managers of these lands. Through the Plan, Mr. Brody hopes to create a similar handbook, a Homeowners' Workbook, for residents. The San Joaquin River RCD is also developing a website and educational video. These projects will have many benefits to both the local community and the CALFED Bay-Delta Program including education, trust building, improved water quality, restoration, and stewardship.

Debbie North (San Joaquin River Parkway Trust) gave a presentation on the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust's project to build local community capacity. The recently funded project will conduct a public survey, develop communication strategies, provide media outreach, and communicate technical issues. It will also develop a multilingual educational program for schools and libraries. The outreach message will be tailored to different parts of the watershed. The trust's efforts will be combined with the efforts of the San Joaquin River Management Plan and The Bay Institute. The project promotes CALFED's emphasis on building broad community support. Increased information and knowledge will ultimately lead to greater community involvement.

Discussion

Meeting participants were invited to provide feedback, ask questions regarding the presentations, and offer suggestions for future CALFED projects.

One participant asked the panel of grantees how their funded projects relate to the Bay-Delta system. Ms. Drake responded that her watershed has a selenium problem and drains to the Bay-Delta, which provides a direct link to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. Mr. Nakamura stated that Clear Creek is home to salmon species and provides spawning grounds. Water quality and fuel reduction issues also provide a connection between Clear Creek and the Bay-Delta. Mr. Koepele stated that the Tuolumne River also has salmon, which is a primary concern for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. Ms. Davis added that the primary connection between CALFED and southern California is water use efficiency. Additionally, all of the presentations are taking the watershed approach that CALFED advocates.

The presenters were also asked for some tips on grant writing. Ms. Drake responded that the first step is to identify what the problem is and then consider potential sources of funding. For CALFED grants, Ms. Drake stated that she closely reviews the CALFED Bay-Delta Program Programmatic EIS/EIR and supporting documents to see how her proposed projects fits with the goals of CALFED. Mr. Brody recommended closely examining the Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) because it illustrates the type of projects the funding agency is seeking.

Another participant commented that the CALFED Watershed Program's last PSP asked applicants to be innovative and encouraged adaptive management. Mr. Bowker stated that the next round of Watershed Program funding would come from Proposition 13. Unfortunately, it will not support capacity building or watershed assessments. It will be oriented toward implementation of "on-the-ground" projects. CALFED Watershed Program staff will work with applicants to ensure their projects are properly framed.

CBC Watershed Work Group

Ms. Rea explained that the agenda was now switching gears from CALFED activities to CBC activities. She explained that recently the CBC Work Group decided to hold biannual meetings and more frequent subgroup meetings. Ms. Rea then asked leaders of some of the subgroups to provide an update on their progress.

Natural Resources Projects Inventory Subgroup

Kevin Ward (UC, Davis) gave a slide presentation on the Natural Resources Projects Inventory (NRPI). She explained that NRPI is a database of natural resource projects throughout the State and presented an online demonstration. One of the new features of NRPI is a form that watershed groups and local communities can fill out online rather than mailing in a hard copy. Ms. Ward walked the meeting participants through the online form completion process and asked for comments on the new form feature.

A participant suggested that some watershed groups might be hesitant to report their projects to NRPI because the form requires the listing of latitude and longitude. Many landowners do not want the location of their properties as public knowledge. Ms. Ward responded that because the database is publicly funded this information must be available. The participant suggested that the latitude/longitude field on the form be optional.

A participant indicated that some watershed coordinators might not have time to post projects in the NRPI database. Another suggested that the point of contact should be the program manager, rather than the grantee. Another participant suggested building the form into grant applications and having them automatically sent to NRPI. Ms. Ward responded that the form was recently considered for use in some grant proposals.

Permit Coordination Subgroup

Cathy Bleier (Resources Agency) provided an update on the Permit Coordination Subgroup. The subgroup is addressing three main issues:

- permit applicant assistance,
- permit application coordination, and
- permit review coordination.

Ms. Bleier distributed a handout that included a list of recommendations to address these issues. She explained that many of the recommendations overlap. The Permit Coordination Subgroup will examine opportunities for moving some of the recommendations forward.

Fund Managers Subgroup

The CBC Work Group completed a white paper entitled *Best Funding Practices for Watershed Management*. Principles developed in this white paper were the topic of a presentation by Ms. Hoyos. Two grant programs, the Sierra Nevada Cascade Grant Program and the Riverine and Riparian Habitat Grant Program, have embraced these principles. The presentation focused on how these principles were being implemented by these two grant programs. Details about these grant programs are available at <http://www.parks.ca.gov> and <http://www.resources.ca.gov>.

Ms. Hoyos also reported that the Funding Database is up and ready for use. Visit this site to see current funding opportunities at http://watershed.ecst.csuchico.edu/new_spin/spinmain.asp.

Technical Assistance Subgroup

Mr. Bowker provided an update on the Technical Assistance Subgroup. He described the subgroup's objectives as providing technical assistance, prioritizing assistance allocation, and coordinating monitoring efforts. A meeting participant suggested that State and federal agencies should help create a regional forum for coordination of local projects. Mr. Bowker responded that a regional forum should have no agenda other than improving communication and connecting local interests with State objectives.

Meeting Wrap Up

Ms. Davis asked meeting participants for feedback and input on the value of the road show meeting.

One participant asked why CBC Work Group meetings are poorly attended. Ms. Rea stated that since the CBC schedule has been redesigned to meet every six months, attendance has decreased. Perhaps the schedule should be revisited.

Another participant expressed appreciation at having a meeting south of Sacramento. Outreach efforts must be improved, as there are other groups that would have liked to attend this meeting.

One participant indicated liking the meeting content and feedback from field staff outside of Sacramento. Another participant suggested increasing participation from RCDs.

A suggestion was made to hold meetings at night to accommodate schedules of nongovernmental participants who cannot attend meetings during the day. Another participant suggested providing scholarships for people to attend these meetings.

One participant indicated that many people cannot spare three days to attend meetings and are forced to choose which to attend. Another participant added that more lead time is needed to draw in more people and that the number of people at this meeting should not discourage the facilitators.

Ms. Davis thanked the participants for attending and adjourned the meeting.

Attachment A

Meeting Participants

| Name | Affiliation |
|---------------------|---|
| Bean, John | California Department of Fish and Game |
| Bleier, Cathy | California Resources Agency |
| Blanco, Cesar | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Bowker, Dennis | CALFED/Sacramento River Watershed Program |
| Brodie, John | San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District |
| Brown, Karen | California Department of Water Resources |
| Butler, Christopher | Student |
| Coulter, Ken | State Water Resources Control Board |
| Davis, Martha | Inland Empire Utilities Agency |
| Drake, Nettie | Placer County CRMP |
| Flores, J.R. | Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| Fox, Dennis | Outdoor Sportsman Coalition |
| Fregien, Gary | California State Parks |
| Gonzales, Robert | East Bay Municipal Utility District |
| Gould, R.J. | U.S. Forest Service |
| Hewitt, John | California Farm Bureau Federation |
| Hopp, Sandy | SCE |
| Hoyos, Renée | California Resources Agency |
| Jacobs, Selene | Jones & Stokes |
| Knecht, Mary Lee | Jones & Stokes |
| Koepele, Patrick | Tuolumne River Preservation Trust |
| Murrison, Teri | EM RCD |
| Nakamura, Gary | University of California Cooperative Extension |
| Newton, Gail | California Department of Fish and Game |
| North, Debbie | San Joaquin River Parkway Trust |
| Rea, Maria | California Resources Agency |
| Reed, Rhonda | California Department of Fish and Game |
| Sandberg, Rick | Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship |
| Sime, Fraser | California Department of Water Resources |
| Small, Mary | California Coastal Conservancy |
| Smith, Abigail | Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board |
| Stetson, Luree | California Department of Conservation |
| Stuart, Jeff | National Marine Fisheries Service |
| Sullivan, Marie | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Taylor, Ernie | California Department of Water Resources |
| Thomas, Lenore | U.S. Bureau of Land Management |
| Ward, Kevin | University of California, Davis |
| Wermiel, Dan | CALFED Bay-Delta Program |